

**MINUTES OF HISTORICAL ADVISORY BOARD
REGULAR MEETING OF THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 5, 2009
COUNCIL CHAMBERS, CITY HALL
2263 SANTA CLARA AVENUE – 7:00 PM**

CONVENE: 7:01 p.m.

ROLL CALL:

PRESENT: Acting Chair Miller, Board Members Irons, Lynch, Owens and Talbot

ABSENT: None

STAFF PRESENT: Jon Biggs, Planning Services Manager/Secretary to the Historical Advisory Board; Tony Ebster, Permit Technician I/Recording Secretary

MINUTES: Minutes from the meeting of December 4, 2008
Motion (Lynch)/Second (Irons) to accept the minutes with changes
Ayes: 4; Noes: 0; Absent: None

AGENDA CHANGES AND DISCUSSIONS:

None

ORAL COMMUNICATIONS:

None

WRITTEN COMMUNICATION:

None

CONSENT ITEMS:

(7-A.) Certificate of Approval – PLN08-1114 – 3263 Thompson Street. The applicant requests a Certificate of Approval for the removal of one diseased Monterey Pine (*Pinus radiata*) located in the public right-of-way adjacent to 3263 Thompson Avenue. The site is located within an R-1, One Family Residence District. (DV)

Motion (Owens)/Second (Lynch) to approve the Certificate of Approval for the removal of the diseased Monterey Pine tree.

Ayes: 5; Noes: 0

Motion Carries

REGULAR AGENDA ITEMS:

(8-A.) Certificate of Approval – PLN08-0970 – 2413 Buena Vista Avenue. The Applicant requests a Certificate of Approval to demolish a structure built prior to 1942 for redevelopment as a parking lot in conjunction with the renovation of a commercial structure and construction of a new retail building on adjacent parcels. The project is located within a C-M (Commercial Manufacturing) Zoning District (JB)

Mr. Jon Biggs pointed out that staff had received two letters after the packet was distributed. He then presented the staff report. He reiterated staff's concerns to the board. He also mentioned that the board's decision to deny the removal of the structure at 2413 from the study list had been appealed to the City Council. He also clarified that the structure was built before 1942 and is on the historical building study list.

Board Member Lynch asked about the conditions that were mentioned at the December Historical Advisory Board meeting.

Mr. Biggs reminded the board of the conditions, which were that a good faith effort be made to give the house away to be relocated to another site.

The public comment period was opened.

Mr. Richard Rutter addressed the board saying that his practice specializes in structures that were built between 1870-1930. He spoke in support of the Alameda Architectural Preservation Society's (AAPS) letter that suggested that two conditions be applied to the approval. Those conditions were to require that a good faith effort be made to give the house away/move the house and that the demolition permit not be granted until a building permit for the new project is issued. He supports saving the house.

Mr. Tom Antholzner addressed the board. He supports saving the house. He mentioned that the house was never put up for sale and stated that restoring the house would not be too expensive and would greatly increase the value of the house. He wanted the board to consider if there was enough parking in the area already.

Mr. Erik Miller addressed the board. He supports saving the house. He looked at the house and mentioned the car wash nearby and how an old showpiece property was torn down. He mentioned the Page and Turnbull report and disagrees with it. He also stated that the house may not be historically significant by itself, but is part of a neighborhood that has taken a beating as other historical structures have been torn down. He feels that the house is important to the neighborhood as a whole.

Mr. Christopher Buckley with the Alameda Architectural Preservation Society (AAPS) stated that there is a fine balance that must be met between the historic nature of the neighborhood and the structure and the redevelopment of the area. He wants Historical Advisory Board to attach the two conditions that were mentioned in the AAPS letter if they do approve the demolition.

Board Member Lynch asked if the Applicant was going to address the board.

Ms. Barbara Price, the Applicant's representative, said that she is available to answer any questions that the board may have. She also mentioned that the house had been advertised and several parties were interested but had fallen through and that the original intention was to keep and rehabilitate the house for some sort of commercial use.

Mr. Adam Garfinkle addressed the board pointing out that there is a strong case not to demolish the building. He is a property owner in the neighborhood and they are concerned about a precedent being set that people can buy houses just to tear them down. He also mentioned another property that a family member owned that had an historic structure that was rehabilitated. He thinks that demolishing the house to build a parking lot is a bad idea.

Ms. Valerie Turpen addressed the board expressing support for saving the house. She also wants to see a good faith effort to give the house away and have it relocated. She wants it to be clear when the 90-day period to give the house away would start and who would oversee the process. She didn't like that the ad for the house didn't describe the house in a positive way. She also mentioned the North of Lincoln redevelopment plan and expressed concern that there may be more houses that could be demolished.

Ms. Melanie Wartenberg addressed the board opposing demolition of the structure. She is concerned with adding more parking on side streets. She is also concerned with dumpster and waste storage near her house as her back yard backs up to the property. She wants the board to give the house a chance to continue to be a part of the neighborhood.

Ms. Nancy Manos addressed the board telling them that the house she moved into was dilapidated and she was distraught by the condition of her house. She was able to rehabilitate the house and bring it back to its original state. She also wanted the board to consider the parking in the neighborhood and feels that they don't need to tear down another house to make another parking lot.

Mr. Kevin Frederick addressed the board by reiterating that he likes the house and wants to see it preserved. He feels that the Page and Turnbull report is not accurate and wants it to be disregarded. He is also worried about outside developers coming into town and destroying the historical integrity of the City. He also mentioned the proposed project and would not like to see the project go forward as is. He supports the suggestions of the AAPS and hopes that the City will enforce the conditions if applied.

Mr. Malyka Chop addressed the board by clarifying where the 'Wedgewood' name came from. He also mentioned that the house he purchased is in need of rehabilitation and wants to bring it back to its original state to help the community. He is also concerned that the developer is not considering the historical aspects of the City.

Ms. Nanette Burdick addressed the board saying that there is parking all over the place and doesn't like that the developer wants to demolish a structure to make another parking lot. She is also concerned that due to the economic times, the developer will demolish the house and not move forward with the new development. She is undecided but wants to support what is best for the community.

The public comment period was closed.

Board Member Irons addressed the members of the public and their concerns. He mentioned what Mr. Garfinkle had said regarding compromised structures. He also mentioned that the previous body had authorized the demolition of a valuable structure that he was not sure was compromised. He spoke to Ms. Turpen's comments about the Island High School site and wasn't sure what was happening with that site. He clarified that the structure is not an historical landmark but is on the study list and is a pre-1942 structure, therefore will need the board's approval for demolition. He also clarified the purview of the board and that they don't get to fine-tune design review. He asked about the delisting and why it was back before the board. He also mentioned that he attended the charette for the North of Lincoln proposal for redevelopment.

Mr. Biggs clarified that because the structure was built before 1942, it needs a Certificate of Approval for demolition.

Board Member Talbot stated that she read the Alameda Municipal Code regarding the role of the board. She thinks that they do need to consider the economics of the situation. While she favors rehabilitation, the reality is that economic factors make rehabilitation infeasible.

Ms. Barbara Price spoke to Board Member Talbot's concern that the Applicant was not at the meeting. She clarified that the Applicant's original intention was to move the structure to the back of the lot and rehabilitate the structure but due to economic constraints, they could not save the building. She also gave information as to what is going to happen with the adjacent parcels on Park Street.

Board Member Lynch asked how many parking spaces were envisioned for the property and how was it decided to increase the number of parking spaces. She also asked about the listing on Craigslist and why the responses fell through. She asked how long the ad had been posted for.

Mr. Biggs clarified the parking requirements.

Ms. Price replied to Board Member Lynch's questions about the listing and said that they had over 20 inquiries but they had all fallen through due to unforeseen circumstances. She also said that all the bricks taken from the demolition of the adjacent building would be used for the new construction. She also mentioned the other media that the house was advertised in.

Board Member Talbot asked if the Applicant would be willing to meet the conditions suggested by the AAPS if the demolition was approved.

Ms. Price said that they Applicant is not willing to abide by the suggested conditions and will appeal the conditions if they are applied to the Certificate of Approval for demolition. They do not want the project held up by the conditions.

Mr. Biggs clarified that the Applicant could appeal the conditions if the demolition is approved with the conditions. He also clarified why the Applicant came before the board with two different applications.

Board Member Lynch said that it was strange that they are being asked for a Certificate of Approval for demolition after they denied the request to remove the structure from the study list.

Board Member Owens said that he is uncomfortable weighing the benefit of the project with the historic benefit of the building due to the fact that they don't have any knowledge of the new project. They can only weigh one side of the project.

Board Member Lynch expressed concerns regarding the AAPS conditions and that they will be appealed if the demolition is approved. She is torn between denying the application and approving the application with the conditions.

Board Member Owens said that if approved, the condition should be that the building be moved.

Acting Chair Miller said that the house has a death sentence no matter what their decision is. He is also concerned that the house will be torn down and the new project will not move forward due to economic troubles. He read from the December 5, 2008 minutes information that describes the house and neighborhood and that was the reason that it was not taken off the list.

Board Member Lynch wanted clarification on how to word the motion for the vote. She moved to deny the application to demolish the structure.

Motion (Lynch)/Second (Owens) to deny the application for a Certificate of Approval to demolish the structure at 2413 Buena Vista Avenue.

Ayes: 4; Noes: 1 (Talbot)
Motion Carries

(8-B.) Certificate of Approval – PLN09-0012 – 1832 Nason Street. The applicant is requesting a Certificate of Approval for the demolition of more than 30% of the value of a pre-1942 single-family dwelling that was damaged by a fire. The project is located within an R-2, Two-Family Residential Zoning District. (DB)

Mr. Dennis Brighton presented the staff report. He explained the project and why it had gone forward without the Certificate of Approval for demolition.

Board Member Lynch expressed confusion by the photos that were attached to the report. She was unsure of what the extent of the damage was due to the fire. She also asked about the windows and what type they are.

Mr. Brighton clarified the confusion and pointed out that there have been some changes made to the plans.

Board Member Irons commented on the windows and how they are made.

Acting Chair Miller asked how the percentage was determined.

Board Member Owens asked how the demolition happened without the Certificate of Approval since it was more than 30%.

Mr. Biggs clarified that after an inspection was scheduled, it was discovered that the builder had gone beyond the scope of work.

Board Member Talbot reminded the board that some of the demolition was because of dry rot and pest problems.

Mr. Keith Durden, project manager with Har-Bro Construction, introduced himself and the job superintendent Chris Krzywicki. They explained why they went as far as they did with the demolition.

Board Member Owens asked if they were installing the new sheer sheathing to the new building code and doing everything as per the guidelines. He suggested that this implied that they were going to have to do more than 30% demolition.

Mr. Krzywicki said that after the demolition had taken place, they realized that more work had to be done than originally anticipated. His understanding was that when they were going through the planning and permit process, everything was taken care of. He said that this was the best way to address the project.

Mr. Durden said that when they started on the project, they were under the impression that the planning portion of the process was taken care of and they did not know they needed to go before the Historical Advisory Board. As the project progressed, they realized that it was more than 30% demolition.

Board Member Lynch asked about the front elevation of the house and if the same door was going to be put back in place. She pointed out that some of the pictures are inconsistent with the new plans.

Board Member Talbot expressed confusion with the amount of demolition and how the numbers were determined, and how the replacement in kind was not going to count as part of the demolition.

Board Member Irons pointed out that it is easily interpreted that only 30% will be demolished if new construction is going to be sistered in with the old construction. He also said that for efficiency sake, it is better to demolish damaged parts of the project than trying to repair the damage.

The Board agreed that according to the drawings, it is inevitable that there is going to be more than 30% demolition.

Board Member Owens expressed concern with the drawings and that they didn't indicate that 30% was going to be the amount demolished and why there wasn't an inspection done before rough framing. He is concerned about setting a precedent. He also clarified that the drawings are different than what is actually happening on the construction site.

Mr. Biggs said that his understanding was that most of the walls were to remain so it would not be more than 30% demolition. He suggested that the office copy of the plans might not be the same as the job site copy of the plans.

Acting Chair Miller pointed out that the plans regarding the windows do not reflect what is actually happening.

Board Member Owens pointed out that the elevations do not accurately reflect what is happening with the structure and that what shows on the plans is more than 30% demolition of the structure.

Mr. Biggs stated that a set of plans will come to planning for approval, and then the building set of plans will be compared to the planning set of drawings to make sure there are no discrepancies.

The public comment period was opened.

Mr. Kevin Beal addressed the board saying that the building burned in April of 2008 and are perplexed by what the hang-up is for the reconstruction. They are eager to get the construction done so they can move back in.

Mr. Christopher Buckley addressed the board saying that the picture of the structure in the 1979 survey did not match the pictures attached to the staff report. He wanted to give the board an idea of what it looked like.

Mr. Biggs said that if you compare the pictures, it can be seen that the changes that were made altered the house significantly.

Ms. Michelle Beal addressed the board saying that they were willing to make the changes requested of them by planning staff. She just wants the house built and is willing to do whatever it takes to make it happen. Their intention was in the best interest of the house, City, and contractor.

Board Member Lynch agrees with staff recommendations. She is concerned with the wording in the report and resolution. She wants more positive language.

Mr. Biggs replied by saying that the wording could be changed.

Motion (Lynch)/Second (Miller) to approve the Certificate of Approval for demolition at 1832 Nason Street.

Ayes: 5; Noes: 0
Motion Carries

BOARD COMMUNICATIONS:

Board Member Lynch talked about Historic Preservation Season and shared her excitement that there are now several major organizations involved. She also talked about the lecture series with the Alameda Museum.

STAFF COMMUNICATIONS:

Mr. Biggs welcomed Board Member Talbot

Board Member Talbot talked about the Mills Act and wants to see it enacted by the City. She clarified that it applies to both residential and commercial.

Mr. Biggs suggested that it be agendaized for an upcoming meeting for discussion.

ADJOURNMENT: 9:06 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted by:

Jon Biggs
Planning Services Manager/Secretary, Historical Advisory Board